

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 335

By Burks

A RESOLUTION to name a bridge on Interstate 40 in Putnam County in honor of the late Sergeant Alex van Aalten, United States Army.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, no person is more deserving of this honor than the late Sergeant Alex van Aalten, United States Army, who sacrificed his life in service of his country on April 20, 2007, during an heroic rescue mission of Dutch troops who were in peril; and

WHEREAS, born in Orlando, Florida, in 1985, Sgt. van Aalten was a 2004 graduate of Cookeville High School, where he served as the Brigade Commander for the Reserve Officer Training Corps; and

WHEREAS, feeling a strong call to serve his country and a passion to preserve its freedom, Sergeant van Aalten joined the U.S. Army in June 2004; he entered basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and served as a gunner on a Humvee in Iraq in 2005; and

WHEREAS, at the time of his death, Alex van Aalten was a Sergeant with the 82nd Airborne, 1-508 Parachute Infantry Regiment, Delta Company at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Alex van Aalten served with great courage and gallantry, giving his life for his country and for the cause in which he believed, and for that ultimate sacrifice, he deserves proper recognition; as a member of the United States Army, he proudly continued an essential tradition of American society: the concept of the citizen-soldier; and

WHEREAS, Sgt. Van Aalten's dedication to excellence in the military and his love of his family, his fellow soldiers and his country, exemplified in his sacrifice of life itself in defense of all that he held dear, stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly desires to name a certain bridge on Interstate 40 in Putnam County to permanently commemorate the singular patriotism, courage, and commitment to duty of the late Sergeant Alex van Aalten; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that the bridge on Interstate 40 that spans U.S. Highway 70N between Exit 300 and Exit 301 at Monterey in Putnam County is hereby designated the "Sgt. Alex van Aalten Memorial Bridge" in recognition of the life of valor and death in combat of Sergeant Alex van Aalten, United States Army.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge described in the first resolving clause as the "Sgt. Alex van Aalten Memorial Bridge". The cost of such signage shall be funded in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, § 54-1-133.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the Commissioner of Transportation in writing that the provisions of this resolution shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Commissioner of Transportation.